John A. Collins,

Present.

(Union)

Boston, Sept. 30, 1840.

At a meeting of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, held this day, the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

Whereas, it having been deemed necessary by the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society, in the present exigency of our cause, to depute John A. Collins, (now a member of this Board, and General Agent of the Massachusetts A. S. Society,) to visit England, in order to obtain such aid for the Parent Society as the friends of negro emancipation in that country may be disposed to contribute —

Resolved, That we cordially approve of the course they have thus thought proper to adopt, believing that it is warranted by the necessities of the Parent Society, and trusting that it will be liberally sustained by our brethren on the other side of the Atlantic.

Resolved, That we heartily concur in the appointment of our brother John A. Collins, and commend him to the confidence and liberality of all who desire the extinction of negro slavery universally, as one who has rendered essential service to the anti-slavery cause in this country.

Resolved, That, for the overthrow of any great moral evil in the world, people of every clime and nation may lawfully combine; and therefore the friends of universal emancipation in England may properly assist us by their contributions, their prayers, and their moral influence.

Francis Jackson Pres't

Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Cor. Sec'y.

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-creased by the extinction of that destructive system, which is crippling her commerce and manufactures, as well as our own.

(We commend our friend and representative, John A. Collins, to your confidence and liberality. He has sacrificed and labored much in the cause, and is unsurpased for his zeal and devotedness to it. Whatever is done, must be done quickly. Invoking the benediction of Heaven upon his mission, we remain,)

Yours, in the cause of bleeding humanity,

James G. Gibbons Ch.n
of the Executive Committee
of the Am. Anti Slavery Society.

Charles Marriott Secretary.

New York Sept.r 25th 1840.

crippled, and, consequently, its ability to promote the interests of the cause of emancipation materially lessened. In addition to this unhappy state of things, a new and onerous burden has been imposed upon us, as the Executive Committee of the Society by the unjustifiable conduct of our predecessors in office. Anticipating the result of the last annual meeting of the Society, at which the policy of the present Committee was sustained by a large majority) they sold the Emancipator to another association a short time prior to the meeting, on the groundless pretext that they had no means to continue its publication, but obviously for the purpose of leaving the Society without an official organ in the time of its greatest need. In all respects, the sale was not only needless, but highly dishonorable, and a palpable breach of trust. It became necessary therefore, for the Society to establish another Journal, even though destitute of subscribers and means to insure its continuance. They accordingly commenced in June last, the "National Anti Slavery Standard" a large and beautiful weekly publication, which has been sustained with much difficulty up to the present time, but which must be speedily discontinued, we fear, unless some assistance can be obtained from the generous and enlightened friends of emancipation in Great Britain. The discontinuance of the Standard would be a virtual overthrow of the American Society.

Under these circumstances we are constrained to make this appeal to our British brethren, trusting it will not be made in vain. If we can be sustained in our operations, some three or four months longer, the crisis will undoubtedly have passed, and the Society will be able successfully to stem the tide of opposition which now threatens to swallow it up. The anti Slavery cause is a common one, and pecuniary aid and moral support may be properly obtained for it, from any quarter of the globe. If the present effort to abolish Slavery in this country be allowed to terminate for the want of means, our destiny as a people, is sealed. In its success, the whole world is deeply interested, and especially England, whose prosperity will be vastly in-

to the succes of the antislavery enterprise. They are acting, in this particular, in concert with the colonizationist & pro-slavery opponents of abolition. As a proof of this, taken from a great mass of corroborative evidence, it will suffice to quote the following extracts from the "Pastoral Letter" of the "General Association of Massachusetts" (a notoriously pro-slavery body) issued in 1837, to the churches under their care — a Letter that was extorted, among other reasons, for the purpose of baffling the efficient and powerful labors of those eminent women, Angelina E. & Sarah M Grimke, as public lecturers on the subject of slavery; — lecturers whose appeals were mightily stirring up all that was sympathetic, humane, and religious in New England, for the overthrow of that atrocious system.

"When woman assumes the place and tone of man as a public reformer, (i. e. lifts up her voice in the cause of God, and downtrodden humanity,) our care and protection of her seem unnecessary; we put ourselves in self defence against her; she yields the power which God has given her for protection, and her character becomes unnatural. × × We cannot but regret the mistaken conduct of those who encourage females to bear an obtrusive and ostentatious part in measures of reform, and countenance any of that sex who so far forget themselves, as to itinerate in the character of public lecturers and teachers."

This was the language of a clerical association most bitterly opposed to the antislavery cause in 1837, and it is now the language of the "American and Foreign Anti Slavery Society" in 1840! The very individuals who were foremost in applauding the conduct of A E & S M Grimke, are now arrayed in opposition to the Parent Society, because it will not officially condemn those invaluable laborers, and trample upon the Constitutional rights of a portion of its members!

As might be expected, the division thus excited in our ranks has had a most disastrous effect upon all our organizations. The resources of the American Society have been greatly

have also been brought forward. It has been well said in reply 'there is also a conscience on the other side'. I believe that in Christ Jesus, all are equal. There is neither Jew, nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female.) I have been grieved at the threats of secession thrown out. I hope those who have made them will think better of it. I was slow, too slow, to withdraw from the Colonization Society. I shall be very slow to withdraw from this society. You must be guilty of palpable, gross immorality, and must show a disposition to continue in it, before I shall do so. Brother Birney thinks we should propose an amendment to the Constitution. He gets the saddle on the wrong horse. The Constitution suits us as it is. One word more. If some auxiliary Societies prefer to send up here, as their delegates, your Chapman's, your Kelley's, and your Barney's, have we the right to object? If a woman can do my work best, I wish to be at liberty to select a woman."

In commenting on the decision of the meeting, the Emancipator (the official Organ of the Society) remarked as follows:

"The vote of the Society being grounded on the phraseology of the Constitution, cannot be justly regarded as committing the Society for or against any party, on the general question of Women's Rights; whereas, a contrary decision, unsupported by the Constitution, would have been taking sides on a question respecting which the Society was bound to entire neutrality."

In this opinion, We, the present Executive Committee entirely concur.

At the Annual Meeting of the Society in May last, a second attempt was made by a number of Clergymen, to disfranchise a portion of the members of the Society on account of their sex. This also, proved unsuccessful. The minority then withdrew, and formed a rival association, as already stated; and the zeal which they manifest for the overthrow of our society, is equalled only by that of all who are hostile

are not without weight in England. Of all their charges, we do solemnly aver, that there is only one that is true; and that is, that in our Society, we proscribe no persons on account of their religion, country, sex, complexion or caste, but welcome all as friends and fellow-laborers, who believe that Slaveholding is a sin against God under all circumstances, and who insist upon the immediate and unconditional emancipation of all who pine in bondage. We do not put a gag into the mouth of any individual who may feel moved to "plead the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction", nor establish any religious or political test as a condition of membership, nor presumptuously determine "the appropriate sphere" of any human being. We regard the anti-Slavery platform as one common to all persons, and deny the right of any on that platform, to make their peculiar theological or sectarian opinions, on any other topic, binding upon their associates as abolitionists. "The head and front of our offending hath this extent — no more."

Since the organization of the American Anti-Slavery Society, men and women have alike made themselves members and life members of it; and consequently have enjoyed a constitutional right to participate in its proceedings. At the annual meeting of the Society in 1839, an attempt was made, for the first time, to exclude persons from acting as members on account of their sex. The Rev. Nathaniel Colver, at the head of a considerable number of clergymen, moved that none but men should have their names placed upon the roll. His motion was amended by substituting the word persons for that of men, in accordance with the language of the Constitution. In the course of the debate upon it, Gerrit Smith of Peterboro, said —

"Brother Leavitt (Editor of the Emancipator) is right. You can exclude no description of persons from the Society. As many women are officers of auxiliary Societies, they are, ex-officio, entitled to seats here. Common usage in this matter has been brought forward. I, never, before last evening, heard usage quoted to overthrow the plain letter of a Constitution. — Religious scruples

of emancipation, or how much faith in God it requires for American abolitionists to endure unto the end. The struggle in this country is, in many respects very different from that which our trans-atlantic co-adjutors had to maintain against British West India Slavery. They had not this giant sin to contend with on their own soil; their natural humanity was uncorrupted by its presence; they had (with some individual and local exceptions) to pass through no fiery ordeal, to incur no personal or pecuniary hazard, to combat no complexional prejudice, to wrestle not "against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places." With us, Slavery is omnipotent. Wide as is our national territory, its fierce Spirit covers the whole surface thereof; and there is not one foot of earth in all the country, on which a fugitive Slave can stand in safety from his pursuers. The conflict is hand to hand, foot to foot, face to face, with this dreadful enemy. All that is corrupt, malignant and powerful in the land, on any subject, is combined to crush our movement. We have to contend against the mighty and united opposition of Church and State; and because fidelity to the cause of the perishing Slave requires us to expose their rottenness and inhumanity, the cry is raised that we are endeavoring to overthrow the Church and to subvert the State!! But God is our witness that we are laboring, with all purity and disinterestedness of motives, to redeem and save them.

3. But the great cause of our present embarasment is, the unhappy division which has taken place in the anti-slavery ranks during the present year, and which has led to a secession on the part of some who were formerly zealous in their support of the American Anti-Slavery Society. A rival society was formed at N. York in May last with the title of The American & Foreign Anti-Slavery Society; the grand object of which, by its official organ, its agents and auxiliaries, seems to be the utter extermination of our organization, rather than the overthrow of Slavery. Our position is one of self defence, not of aggression. We have had the most extraordinary, calumnious, and flagrant charges brought against us by individuals who formerly stood high in our confidence and affection, of whom we expected better things, and whose names

sympathy and benevolence, – we would gladly do so. But the exi-
-gency of the times, and the embarassment in which we find ourselves
placed, require us to take this step. We have done what we could, and
still we need your aid; and without it, we see no prospect of our
being able much longer to keep the field, in an organized capacity,
against the foes of human rights. Why it is that we are thus straitened,
we proceed very briefly to State.

1. The present is a time of delirious political excitement in this
country, – an excitement most injurious to the progress of anti-slavery
principles, and one which absorbs, in an extraordinary manner, the
feelings and interests of all classes of the people. It has been height-en-
-ed by the pecuniary embarassments which have so extensively pre-
-vailed in the United States for the last two or three years, and in
addition to the usual party stimulus, grows out of the insane attempt
to restore the prosperity of the nation, by carefully guarding that execra-
-ble system of slavery, which is fast hurrying us all to ruin. Both
of the candidates for the Presidential Station, are openly and une-
-quivocally pledged to stand by the Slaveholding States, and, as far
as may be in their power, to shield them from every anti-slavery assault
that may be made upon their hideous "domestic institution". It is not
a struggle, therefore, either to deliver the country from the primary
cause of its pecuniary suffering, or to place in office, a friend of liberty.
Whether Gen^l Harrison or Martin Van Buren be the successful
candidate, the Slaveholding power will still hold complete su-
-premacy over the nation.

2. Though the real growth of our cause has been marvellous
even in the eyes of its enemies, yet we are daily making the painful
discovery that "all are not Israel who are of Israel," and that
there are many who are abolitionists only in name. They run well
for a time; but finding that they must either sacrifice their sectar-
-ian or party prejudices, or compromise their anti-slavery principles,
they have chosen the latter alternative. Not that they have lost
the <u>form</u>, but that they deny the <u>power</u> of abolition. It is difficult,
if not impossible, for our friends in England to understand the
peculiar character of the opposition we are called upon to encoun-
-ter, or how mountainous are the obstacles that tower in the path

GARRISON MSS.

To the Abolitionists of Great Britain.

Beloved Co-adjutors in the cause of Universal Emancipation

We depute our trustworthy and esteemed friend and brother, John A Collins, to visit you at the present crisis, in order to obtain such pecuniary aid for the Anti Slavery enterprise in this country, as you may find it in your hearts and within your ability to bestow. We are not forgetful of what you have had to endure, to sacrifice, and to overcome, in seeking the utter overthrow of British West India Slavery. We have sympathized with you in all your trials, and are now rejoicing with you in the success which the God of the oppressed has so wonderfully vouchsafed to you. We bid you God-Speed in your efforts to civilize and christianize Africa, and especially to redeem oppressed and mis-governed India. For all that you have done, by way of example, expostulation, remonstrance and encouragement, to sustain those who, on this side of the Atlantic, are struggling against the most fearful odds for the overthrow of Slavery, we bless and honor you. We have been cheered by your approving voices, inspired by your smiles, and strengthened by your co-operation. Surely you have neither spoken nor labored in vain.

Hitherto, we have made no direct appeal to you for pecuni-
-ary aid, to enable us to carry on our great moral conflict against the one great crime and curse of our land. If it could have been sooner granted to us, we do not doubt that our enterprise would have been much further advanced than it is at present, for as in every other philanthropic movement that is wisely conducted, the dissemination of light and truth is graduated by the available means and instrumentalities adapted to accomplish the object in view. If we could possibly avoid making this application to you for assistance, – if we could possibly sustain the operations of the American Anti Slavery Society, without appealing to your

Misses Murray & Sheal
Secretaries to the
Glasgow Emancipation Society

1840

Credentials of Rev. John A. Collins from the American Anti-Slavery Society on his trip to England in 1840.

Address written by Jas. S. Gibbons and signed by him and Chas. Marriott.

Resolutions written by Wm. Lloyd Garrison and signed by him and Francis Jackson.